2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

142
291
302
415
877

Pl. 5

[following p. 248-E]

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

142
291
302
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476

Pl. 10

[Following p 248-J]

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

picked for the task by the boy's own parents. This initiation of youths still seems to occur: some do it because an older man has advised them to, others because they love the woman, and others again because her own husband seems unable to satisfy her. The elder brother's wife is in fact the most accessible person for a youth's training or gratification: the two of them are often working together in the fields, and even if they do not live under the same roof a young man always has ready access to his brother's house. In earlier days relations with such a woman were particularly common when she was on the way from her husband's village to visit her father, when she was working outside the village, or when her husband went out to the fields to guard the crops against wild animals during the night. The husband might himself recommend that his younger brother stay with his wife, to assuage her fears of the Kurumba sorcerers. If the young man were seen leaving her house in the morning, no one would criticize him or think less of the woman.

Such formal sexual initiation has virtually ended, but adolescents still indulge in sexual play, some girls even being so aggressive as to way-lay boys in the woods for this purpose. There is no indication that such play occurs before the coming of puberty, and nowadays the fact that most children are attending school makes it less frequent. Since this kind of play most often occurs within the village community it takes place between consanguineal relatives, albeit distant ones. The play is of course conducted in secret, and without knowledge of the parents. The most adventurous kind of love assignment is one in which a youth hides inside the house of his beloved, by squatting inside the huge grain storage basket (*balla*) that some homes still have. Once everyone has gone to sleep he gets out for the rendezvous. Girls who are guarding a field from the birds are an ideal target for amorous adventures; and there it is usually a pair of girls who are approached by a pair of boys. Girls gathering wood in the forest may also be propositioned, but if they spend too much time away from the rest of the women their absence will be noticed. If it should happen that an adolescent girl becomes pregnant by a boy who is her agnate she cannot marry him, and her parents therefore try to arrange a marriage as quickly as possible with a male who is in the "correct" relationship to their daughter, preferably a cross-cousin. Generally a man does not want to marry a pregnant girl unless she is carrying his child.

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

343 841 837 amorous affairs. If a man wanted a particular girl he would note when she went to the menstrual hut, and would then persuade a female friend to stay in the hut with her and turn her fancy away from her husband and towards this unannounced suitor. A girl's parents or husband would therefore keep a careful watch on who else was in the hut. In a small hamlet, on the other hand, the female 343 841 154 715 population might be so little that a woman would often find herself alone in the hut. In that case she would be afraid to sleep there by herself for fear of Kurumba sorcerers and ghosts. (This fear ran counter to the Badaga belief that Kurumbas themselves were afraid of menstruating women, and hence would never enter the hut and secretly ravish or attack any menstruating woman through sorcery.) Because of this fear, a woman who was alone in the hut would persuade another who was due to menstruate in the next few days to tell her family the period had already begun, so that the two could sleep together in the hut. This ruse would not allow the second woman to spend extra time in the hut however, and she might well continue to menstruate after leaving it, but would keep the matter 841 843 343 secret. Sometimes a woman would be already pregnant when she entered the hut for such purely social reasons. Since the number of weeks until she came to term might be calculated from the last day a woman was in the hut, it therefore could happen that she gave birth in what seemed to be the eighth month of pregnancy.

841 517 When a group of women were together in the menstrual hut they could engage in a number of interesting activities. The only work they were permitted to do was to gather firewood for use there, prepare their own food, and wash their clothes (at a place separate from the usual spot). It was generally while in the hut that an adolescent 304 girl underwent tattooing. The only game the women played was 524 "eye-bean," an ancient Old World game which involved the redistribution of beans in a series of a dozen depressions. In general girls were not allowed to play this until they had their first pregnancy, but younger girls did play it too while in the menstrual hut.

841 415 264 783 Cooking vessels kept in the hut were common to the whole village, and were in constant use. There was no need to destroy or even purify them after use, since everyone involved with them was in a state of pollution. Foodstuffs could be given to the women by their relatives, but it was taboo to give them cooked foods. No pot, basket or cloth would be taken to the hut with food, since it could not be taken back home afterwards. Thus when a woman in the hut was

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

about to receive food, she brought a pot outside, left it on the ground, and stepped back about five meters while the visitor poured her foodstuffs into the pot. This was in fact the usual way of giving food to untouchables in South India. As women did not expect very good food in the menstrual hut they tended to fill themselves up before leaving home: "The eye of the ox which has been ploughing is on the village; the eye of a woman just before menses is on the hearth." A more rambunctious proverb states: "The woman who has not eaten is like the one in the menstrual hut; the woman who does not fart is like summer"—summer being a rather uncomfortable period.

Adult Sexual Activity

3.15. Badaga society seems to be more tolerant of sexual escapades, whether within or beyond the bonds of marriage, than is usually recorded as the case in other Hindu communities. Thus a frustrated missionary reported: "Badaga women, who have not come much into contact with Christianity, freely express their disgust at the miserable condition of Christian women, who are bound to one husband only!" (Anonymous 1894: 547). A proverb still heard on the lips of Badaga men expresses their exasperation with womenfolk: "A passionate wife is as bad as a house that leaks" (Metz 1864: 94). Yet there is little of the double standard of morality that separates the sexes in orthodox Hindu and Muslim India. Badagas of both sexes enjoy coitus, a factor that is essential to procreation, for they believe that unless a couple are properly satisfied by the act the woman will not conceive. Ignorance of the physiological facts of paternity is evidenced from the belief expressed by older informants that, if either husband or wife is contemplating divorce and remarriage, then pregnancy cannot occur even though they still have intercourse. Nevertheless they do believe that a foetus grows out of the semen in the womb, and it is fed by blood coming from the mother's belly (10.13). In those situations where a couple are satisfied but no pregnancy ensues, it is assumed that some sin has been committed by either the couple or their ancestors.

Despite this emphasis on the pleasurable aspect of sex, much coitus is reported to occur for other reasons. When a couple have been working hard all day in the woods or fields they really feel the need for total rest throughout the night. Yet they may still have inter-

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
AW50 Badaga AW50

778 quit the family. Thus a Badaga will never sleep with a light in
787 his house, but before he goes to bed worships it and then carefully
(513) extinguishes it. A grand feast is given that night by the agnatic kindred or by a son of the dead person to which all come to eat.
764 Both in the river and in the house the *Linga* is worshipped by the Badagas if they are of the Lingayat class.

The feast closes the first day's funeral rite of the Badagas. The second day's ceremony is a simple affair. It is what is called the pouring of the milk over the grave. On the morning of the second day the eldest mourner of the family starts to the burial place with five measures of the *Koraṭi* grain tied up in his cloth and a big new pot containing milk.

Worship is performed to the stone placed in the middle of the grave and the milk from the new pot is poured over it. The son pours it first and then the others follow him in turn. Each of those assembled there then takes up a handful of the *Koraṭi* grain and pronouncing the words *Avvappane ṭeru*—'Mix yourself with your forefathers'—they cast it over the middle stone all at once. All then march round from south to north and touch the five
(302) stones. They then proceed to the river, where, after having been shaved—even their moustaches are removed as an indication of their deep mourning,—they all bathe. They then worship the *Linga* there and return home where the same act of worship is again performed, and this brings to a conclusion the ceremonies of the second day.

The third day is a very important day and the funeral rites of the dead may be said to close with it. At 1 A.M. on that day four plantain leaves, four measures of rice, four measures of bean-seed
(415) and four new pots are made ready in the dead man's house. All gather there round a *Kerachi*—a bronze pan used for frying grain, &c. Paddy is poured into this *Kerachi* by the agnatic kindred and by a son of the dead person, while five females, the wife not joining, stir it up with reaping hooks. The *Kerachi* is already placed upon a lighted fire; and while the paddy is thus being turned up the wife mourns outside with loud wailings. A handful of straw from the outside thatch of the house is brought in and lighted up in the hall —*edirmane*. The four new pots, four plantain leaves, &c., are
(782) passed over it. Five or three youngsters hold the pots, while the
(539) elders utter the following prayer:—

Hâl hechchali hap hechchali
Kuḍi hechchali payil hechchali,